



Alabama Transportation Assistance Program
Alabama's LTAP Center

Between the Lines

Winter 2024

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A Message from the Director

From **Dr. Larry Rilett** to the
Alabama Transportation Assistance Program Community

Our roads have historically become safer over time, with both the number of US roadway fatalities and the fatality rate, on average, steadily declining from the mid-1970s until approximately 2010. Since then, unfortunately, these metrics have increased. For instance, in 2021, there were 43,230 roadway fatalities and the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) was 1.38—**numbers not seen since 2007**. Furthermore, our most vulnerable transportation users are also facing worsening trends. Since 2010, pedestrian deaths have surged by 77%, compared to a 22% increase in all other traffic fatalities. Historically, Alabama has had higher fatality rates than the national average and we are not exempt from these national trends. Researchers attribute this increase to several factors, including distracted driving, impaired and reckless driving, and the increasing size and weight of vehicles.

There is much to be done to reverse these trends and make our roadways safer for the public. A core mission of the Alabama Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP) is to improve roadway safety in our local communities. The Alabama Roadway Safety Conference (ARSC), which has a focus on proven countermeasures and techniques to enhance safety, is a critical part of this mission. **Over 220 transportation professionals** attended the 2024 ARSC in Gulf Shores in October which was a ten percent increase over the 2023 ARSC. This year's topics included improved roadway barriers, successful Safety Action Plan developments, state and federal funding opportunities, and low-cost safety countermeasures that have proven effective in local and rural communities. Attendees left the 2024 ARSC with a wide range of roadway safety tools that they can implement in their communities. The 12th Annual ARSC will be held on **October 21-23, 2025**, at the Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa in Florence, Alabama. I hope to see you all there!

Our workshops and webinars are essential for delivering state-of-the-art safety techniques and countermeasures to our customers. Our most popular offering is work zone training for employees, and we strongly encourage everyone operating work zones to take the course and refresher as needed. As part of this year's LTAP work plan, we are introducing **two new safety workshops**: "Fundamentals of Traffic Engineering" and "Fundamentals of Roadway Geometric Design." Stay tuned for dates and locations, which will be advertised on our ATAP website, listserv, and social media.

I'm pleased to announce that Mr. Scott Tison has joined ATAP as our new Associate Director of Training and Technical Assistance. With experience at both the Florida and North Carolina LTAPs, Scott brings extensive knowledge in work zone training, plans reading, guardrail installation, maintenance and repair, flagger training, work zone safety, and roadway drainage maintenance. He has conducted several workshops in Alabama and was a featured speaker at the 2023 ARSC Conference. Scott, a member of several TRB Committees, will be a great asset to ATAP, particularly in managing the day-to-day operations of the Alabama LTAP. **Welcome, Scott!**

In closing, I **deeply appreciate** our workshop, webinar, and conference attendees for making the ATAP program a success. Your feedback is invaluable in enhancing our offerings so please make sure to respond to our surveys and don't hesitate to contact us directly with suggestions for improvement. Have a safe and enjoyable fall, and I look forward to seeing you at our future events.

Courses, Workshops, & Webinars

As part of ATAP's mission to serve Alabamian public works agencies, an array of workshops and webinars are available to provide training and technical assistance to any agency who requires it. Upcoming workshops include Flagger Training, Temporary Traffic Control and Drainage at various locations such as Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, Mobile, Huntsville and Dothan. Additionally, in November, a webinar was hosted highlighting available funding opportunities.

In addition to these workshops and webinars, ATAP also provides training through on-demand classes, creating courses to satisfy gaps in training or to update processes as proposed or requested by state and local agencies. In November, ATAP hosted a private workshop on Temporary Traffic Control for the city of Huntsville to update their agency staff on state-of-the-art temporary traffic control plans and processes. This workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge bases and raise awareness of such concepts as work zone safety, flagging procedures, safety apparel, temporary traffic control elements, and typical applications found within the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), using a variety of materials including slideshows, worksheets, clicker questions, videos, hands-on tabletop models, and field exercises.

If you are interested in this or a similar professional development opportunity, we are here to help! Please don't hesitate to reach out to Hollis Marshall through email at hcm0055@auburn.edu or by phone at 334-844-5782!

Build A Better Mousetrap

Each year, FHWA recognizes and celebrates local government and tribal agencies who pioneer innovative solutions that improve transportation performance by increasing safety and saving money on projects. Below are the 2024 Winners:

Innovative Project Award - "Slow and Safe, Save a Life"

Modified speed cushions to address high speeds and increased traffic volumes through residential communities without impacting emergency response.

Bold Steps Ahead - "Street Sweeper Conversion to Leaf Vac Unit"

Repurposed street sweepers for leaf pickup maintenance

Smart Transformation Aware - "Fifth-Wheel Quick-Attach Sander"

An attachment to modify semi-tractors to assist with salting and sanding hazardous, icy roads during the winter months.

Pioneer Award - "Trackless Automated Loader"

A repurposed sander into a chute for easier load and dispense of sand mixture materials during winter operations.

If you're interested in becoming involved in the Build a Better Mousetrap 2025 competition and would like assistance from our team, please reach out to us via email at atap@auburn.edu or call us at 1-800-446-0382.

Upcoming Conferences

This fiscal year, ATAP will be organizing two conferences: the Alabama Road Safety Conference and the Alabama Transportation Conference.

The 2024 Alabama Road Safety Conference took place on October 15-17, 2024, in Gulf Shores, Alabama at The Lodge at Gulf State Park with over 220 transportation professionals in attendance.

Upcoming in 2025, ATAP will host the Alabama Transportation Conference at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Center (BJCC) in Birmingham, Alabama on February 11-12, 2025. This conference is designed for federal and state highway personnel, road building contractors, general contractors, city and county engineers, consulting engineers, construction material vendors, researchers, professional society representatives, and university faculty members. Technical sessions, sit-down luncheons, catered breakfasts, a welcome reception, and breaks will be designed to facilitate an exchange of ideas among federal, state, local and private transportation engineering and construction professionals. The conference will also include an Exhibit Hall which will be designed to allow attendees to learn about vendor's capabilities and provide additional networking opportunities. Registration for the 2025 ATC is now open, and information regarding the agenda, speakers and accommodations are available on our website.

<https://eng.auburn.edu/atap/conferences/events/2025febtrans.conf.html>

ATAP's Safety First Quiz : Flagger Safety

Question: What is wrong with this picture?

Background: The county is conducting paving work on a Two-Lane Roadway. They have decided to shut down one lane and set up temporary traffic control so that the roadway capacity can be shared by the two opposing traffic flows. To do this they are utilizing a one-person flagging operation.

Answer: The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) states in Section 6E-08 Flagger Stations, Note 3, "The Flagger should identify an escape route that can be used to avoid being struck by an errant vehicle." There are three potential issues in the photo:

- In the picture, the Flagger is standing next to a curb and gutter section. If an errant vehicle fails to stop or loses control of the vehicle, how would the flagger escape? How would the flagger avoid tripping while safely getting out of the way of an errant vehicle? The Flagger should be standing on the shoulder section (beyond the curb and gutter section). It is safer for both the flagger and the motoring public.
- The flagger should stay in a visible position – not in the shade. It is imperative that the Flagger be clearly identified by the on-coming traffic. Again, it is safer for everyone.
- Following MUTCD guidelines, it would be advisable to use a two-person flagging operation. This way the work crew is always observing on-coming traffic and can identify potential threats (e.g. errant vehicle) sooner.



This scenario is covered in the ATAP Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) workshops. The workshop will cover the key sections of the MUTCD, demonstrate how to avoid potential liability, and, most importantly, provide the tools to keep workers safe. If you haven't been through our TTC training, or would like to refresh your TTC training, we would like to see you at our next workshops. Please see page 3 or go to the ATAP website for the upcoming schedule of workshops.

This example was provided by ATAP Associate Director Scott Tison (334-844-5762 or sit0006@auburn.edu). If you have any questions about worker's safety, work zone traffic control or any other questions please don't hesitate to call ATAP at (334) 844-5762 or by email at atap@auburn.edu.

Staff Spotlight

Carla Story, a native of Valley, AL, has resided in Auburn for the past thirty years. As the Academic Programs Administrator for ATAP, Carla has been with the department since 2013. She is responsible for workshop and conference registrations, Accounts Receivable/Payable, and managing the ALDOT Employee Training contract.

In her spare time, Carla enjoys watching sports and playing with her grandbaby.

Carla Story



Save the Date!

Workshop: Flagger Training

January 21 *Mobile*
January 22 *Montgomery*
January 23 *Birmingham*
January 24 *Huntsville*

Outside Opportunities

Expand Your Toolbox: Discover NDE Techniques for Testing Material Integrity

December 12, 2024

PROWAG Final Rule: Notable Changes and Current Status

December 17, 2024

Funding Opportunities and Grant Writing

In November, ATAP hosted a webinar dedicated to Notice of Available Funding Opportunities and providing visibility into upcoming opportunities.

This webinar focused on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and how it makes historic investments in the transportation sector with the expectation to improve public safety and climate resilience, create jobs, and deliver a more equitable future. The BIL offers unprecedented opportunities for local governments, communities, and public and private organizations to collaborate and secure competitive federal grants to solve their transportation problems. The webinar provided participants with an overview of discretionary grant opportunities that can help meet their transportation needs.

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Auburn University has been home to the Alabama Local Transportation Assistance Program (LTAP) since its inception in 1983.

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